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## Unstuck in Time. Or the sudden presence of the past

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# **Performing the Past**

Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe

*Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree and Jay Winter (eds.)*

Amsterdam University Press

Cover: Lewes Bonfire Night, procession of the Martyr's Crosses. Part of the Bonfire Night celebrations on the 5th November in Lewes, Sussex. The burning crosses commemorate the 17 Protestant martyrs who were burnt at the stake in the town during the Marian persecutions of 1555–1557.

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## CHAPTER 4

# **Unstuck in time. Or: the sudden presence of the past**

CHRIS LORENZ

*If you could lick my heart, it would poison you.*  
Yitzhak (Ante) Zuckermann,  
second in command during the Warsaw Ghetto  
uprising (1944) in the film *Shoah* (1985)

### **From history to memory**

Since 1989, the past is no longer what it used to be, and neither is the academic study of the past – that is the *Geschichtswissenschaft*. No historian had predicted the total collapse of the Soviet bloc and the sudden end of the Cold War, the ensuing German unification and the radical reshuffling of global power relations. A similar story goes for the other two ‘epochal’ and ‘rupturing’ events of the past two decades: ‘9/11’ and the economic meltdown of 2008.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, academic historians can claim very little credit for their traditional role as the privileged interpreters of the present in its relationship to the past and the future (and it is only a small consolation to know that the social scientists and the economists performed only slightly better on this score).

Maybe even more surprising – or disappointing – is the observation that no historian had imagined the eruptions of the past into the present which started in Eastern-Central Europe directly after 1989 – especially in the form of genocidal war and of ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia.

Suddenly it seemed like the Croats and the Serbs had slipped back into the Second World War.

Through these events both the 'pastness of the past' (which had been the constitutive presupposition of academic history since the French revolution) and the capacity of academic history to explain how the past is connected to the present, suddenly lost their 'evidential' quality. If burying the dead is equal to creating the past, as Michel de Certeau and Eelco Runia both have argued, their funeral was suddenly interrupted, confronting historians since 1989 with a 'haunting' past instead of with a – distant – 'historical' past.<sup>2</sup> This change can undoubtedly be connected to an experience of crisis, as Jan-Werner Müller has recently suggested: 'According to John Keane, "crisis periods .... prompt awareness of the crucial importance of the past for the present. As a rule, crises are times during which the living do battle for the hearts, minds and souls of the dead". But the dead also seem to be doing battle for the hearts, minds and souls of the living, as the latter often resort during times of crisis to a kind of mythical re-enactment of the past'.<sup>3</sup>

Another constitutive presupposition of academic history since the early nineteenth century – that the nation and the nation-state were the fundamental subjects of history – also lost its plausibility around the same time – as if there was a sudden consciousness that the mass killings of the twentieth century had been caused by nationalisms run wild. Since then, 'methodological nationalism' is 'out' and debates concerning the question which spatial units should replace the nation in history writing have been rampant. Both sub-national units (cities or city-networks, regions, borderlands, etc.) and supra-national units (like empires, cultures, civilizations, networks, diasporas, or the entire world) have been advertised as such. Therefore, not only the temporal dimension of history has turned into a new object of discussion in academic history after 1989, but also history's spatial construction, spiraling into discussions about 'transnational', 'global', and even 'big' history.

Last but not least, the relationships between history and politics, history and ethics, and history and justice have resurfaced in unprecedented ways – all problems academic history claimed to have 'left behind' by splitting off the 'historical' past from the 'practical' past when history turned into an 'autonomous profession'. The attempts to confine academic history to the issues of epistemology and of methodology and to fence it off from the domain of politics and ethics seem to have lost whatever plausibility they had in the second half of the catastrophic twentieth century.

Of course each individual issue had been raised at some point before 1989 and of course national history never had been the only show in university town – most certainly not – but at no time had these questions collectively unsettled academic history to a similar degree. Fundamental questions as regards the ‘the founding myth’ of professional, academic history – its ‘objectivity’ – had started destabilizing academic history from the 1970s onwards in the slipstream of multiculturalism, the ‘cultural wars’, and the ‘politics of identity’ – often referred to collectively under the name of ‘postmodernism’. Class, gender, ethnicity, and race were mobilized successively and successfully in order to undermine the academic historians’ claim to ‘objectivity’. These collective identities fragmented the profession along different fracture lines and opposed history’s ‘objectivity’ to the notion of (class, gender, etc.) ‘experience’ and – increasingly and most fundamentally – to the notion of ‘memory’. Illustrative for these developments was the fact Peter Novick’s debunking book on the American historical professions claim to ‘objectivity’ was rewarded with the AHA Prize in 1988.<sup>4</sup>

The notion of memory became the common denominator for anchoring the past in collective experiences of specific groups. Especially *traumatic* or *catastrophic* memories became the privileged window on the past since the 1980s. Wulf Kansteiner formulates the present predicament of ‘memory studies’ as follows: ‘The predominance of traumatic memory and its impact on history is [...] exemplified by the increasing importance since the 1970s of the Holocaust in the ‘catastrophic’ history of the twentieth century. Despite an impressive range of subject matter, memory studies thrive on catastrophes and trauma and the Holocaust is still the primary, archetypal topic in memory studies. [...] Due to its exceptional breadth and depth Holocaust studies illustrate the full range of methods and perspectives in event-oriented studies of collective memory, but we find similar works analyzing the memory of other exceptionally destructive, criminal and catastrophic events, for instance World War II and fascism, slavery, and recent genocides and human rights abuses. Especially with regard to the last topic attempts to establish the historical record of the events in question and the desire to facilitate collective remembrance and mourning often overlap. In comparison, the legacy of relatively benign events is only rarely considered in contemporary studies of collective memory.’<sup>5</sup>

In the following contribution I will analyse some of the implications of the rise of memory for history as an academic discipline in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Basically I will argue that the rise of memory necessitates reflection both on the frames of representation of academic



history – especially on its temporal and spatial frames – and on its political and ethical entanglements.

My analysis starts with going back to the origins of academic history in the early nineteenth century and its connection to the nation/state. In the first section I argue that academic history presupposed a specific conception of space – that of the nation-state – and that it identified history with the process of nation formation. I also argue that the specific claim of academic history to ‘objectivity’ was directly based on and thus dependent on this spatial unit.

In the second section I argue that academic history was based on a specific conception of time – that of linear, irreversible and teleological time. Following Koselleck and Hartog I interpret this time conception in terms of the ‘modern regime of historicity’ and with Agamben I locate the origins of this ‘modern’ time conception in a mixture of the Greek and the Christian ideas of time. I also argue that the academic conception of history as the process of nation formation is based on this ‘modern’ time conception. Last but not least I argue that the storyline of national history is derived from the narrative structure of the Christian bible and that both imperial histories and class histories can be regarded as sub-genres of national histories in this respect.

In the third section I argue with Nora and Hartog that the rise of memory studies in the 1980s is related to the fall of national history and that this development can best be explained in terms of a change of the ‘modern’ to the ‘presentist’ regime of historicity. Because their analysis of presentism does not confront the catastrophic or traumatic character of the present past explicitly, however, their diagnosis of ‘presentism’ is missing important characteristics. With Spiegel, Langer, Bevernage, and Chakrabarty I argue that the recognition of ‘historical wounds’ is an essential ingredient of ‘presentism’ and that this presupposes a time conception which is not ‘erasive’ and which can explain *duration*.

In the fourth section I go into some of the implications of my amended version of ‘presentism’ (which could be called ‘catastrophic presentism’) for academic history. Two implications are emphasized. First, given the fact that the claim of academic history to be ‘objective’ is damaged beyond repair, the ideal of ‘resurrecting the past’ must be abandoned for a systematic reflection on the representational forms of history. The recent debates about the spatial alternatives to national history in transnational, imperial and global history can be interpreted as examples of this type of reflection. Second, however, given the fact that the catastrophes in twentieth-century history are present in such a manner that they have

undermined the claim that academic history can keep 'distance' from them, academic history needs to reflect on its *own* political and ethical investments. In Holocaust historiography, these issues have already made it to the agenda. A reflexive academic history in the twenty-first century can no longer afford to be only academic. Therefore I argue that a reflexive kind of history writing does not only need to problematize its (epistemological) choices of representation, but also its political and ethical investments.

## **I. The rise of academic history and the rise of the nation-state**

Traditionally, history's identity as an academic discipline has been explicated in epistemological and in methodological terms, that is, in terms of its *truth claim*, based on its *source critical methods* and its *archival foundation*.<sup>6</sup> The origin of this idea was usually ascribed to the founders of what is known as the 'Historical School' in Germany: Barthold Georg Niebuhr, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and, last but not least, to Leopold von Ranke. Therefore it was not surprising that the spread of academic history over the rest of the globe was usually attributed to the spread of Rankean ideas and of Ranke's pupils – a diffusionist and Europe-centric picture for sure (with the United States and Japan as the extra-European model cases). During the last decades, however, this diffusionist picture of 'scientific' history, originating in Berlin, has been seriously questioned.<sup>7</sup> Not only the Antiquarians and the Enlightenment thinkers have increasingly been recognized as important origins of academic history – by Momigliano, Iggers, and Grafton, among others – but recently also history's exclusive European origins have been questioned. Edward Wang, for instance, has argued that, fully independent of Europe, methods and traditions of 'evidential learning', similar to those of the Antiquarians, have been developed in the Japanese, Chinese, and Islamic cultures. Thus although for instance Japan and China actually did 'import' Rankean ideas about 'scientific' history in the nineteenth and twentieth century, this does *not* imply that Rankean ideas about history were the only ones around and the only ones effective. Transnational transfers of ideas rarely produce only 'copies' of the original, instead usually producing 'local' adaptations.<sup>8</sup>

However this may be, the spectacular rise of academic history as an institution is usually explained by the direct connection between the professionalization of history at the one side and the nation-state at the other.

Therefore academic history was basically conceived of as *national* history, although in practice other varieties of history – like ecclesial, legal and local history – continued to exist by its side. Moreover, quite a few nations defined themselves as imperial nations, so the differences between national and imperial histories were rather a matter of degree than of a kind.<sup>9</sup>

This case for the ‘special connection’ between academic history and the nation-state been emphasized again recently by prominent experts in historiography. ‘The rise of professional scholarship and of new “scientific” history it generated were closely related to the strong currents of nationalism’, Georg Iggers recently observed (although this of course does not mean that Ranke was a German nationalist).<sup>10</sup> Similar observations have been made by Daniel Woolf who signals a broad consensus among both the national historians and their (subaltern) critics about the crucial importance of the nation for academic history: ‘History is the principal mode whereby non-nations were converted into nations’ (declaims Prasenjit Duara). ‘Nations emerge as the subjects of History just as History emerges as the ground, the mode of being, of the nation’. Others concur: ‘There is no way’, one scholar has asserted (without apparent awareness of his silent extrapolation beyond the West), ‘to write a non-national history. The national framework is always present in the historiography of modern European societies’ – and Woolf adds, ‘The qualifier “European” may be unnecessary’, quoting historians from outside Europe. Dipesh Chakrabarty, Gérard Bouchard, and Stefan Berger can be named as further support for Woolf’s conclusion concerning the omnipresence of the national framework in history writing outside Europe.<sup>11</sup>

For most academic historians of the nineteenth century, identification with their state and nation (or ‘people’, ‘race’, and ‘tribes’, all of which were used as synonyms of ‘nation’) only seemed natural, because they identified the historical process *itself* with the genesis and development of nations and ‘their’ states.<sup>12</sup> Through this (Herderian) identification, *national* history appeared as *the* adequate representation of the historical process – as its ‘natural mode of being’, in Woolf’s words. As far as world or ‘universal’ history was concerned, it was primarily conceived as a ‘sum’ of national histories and therefore typically as a project for the *future*. It was no accident that Ranke only turned to world history – characteristically meaning the history of Europe for him – at the very *end* of his long career – in the 1880s. The attempts at ‘world history’ originating in the Enlightenment were rejected as ‘philosophical’ – as not based on archival research and thus basically as premature syntheses without a foundation in ‘scientific’ analyses.<sup>13</sup>

Through this identification of the process of nation formation with history itself (that is the fusion of romantic ethnic nationalism and historicism) national historians could also see their histories as 'truthful' and/or as 'objective'. The discourse of 'objective' history and the discourse of the nation/state were intimately connected from the second half of the nineteenth century: striving after 'objectivity' was conceived as leaving 'partisanship' behind in terms of religious and political affiliations within the national arena. This connection explains why most historians regarded 'the' point of view of 'the nation' as the 'objective' point of view and why they did not experience a tension between their striving after 'objectivity' and their role as 'half-priests and half-soldiers' of their nation.<sup>14</sup>

Similar presuppositions would later support the Marxist identification of history with the process of 'class formation' and of 'class struggle'. Marxist historians, too, would see themselves as 'half priests and half soldiers' of their (socialist) 'nation' – that is: of the proletarian class. And they, too, would conceive of history as an 'objective', teleological process – in their case, of the 'classless society' in the making. Eric Hobsbawm's early publications such as *Primitive Rebels* (1959, 1971) and *Bandits* (1969) furnish good examples of how this class view structures historical narratives. It therefore makes good sense to view the Marxist concept of class on the model of the nation and to view the 'classless society' as 'the nation of workers' in the making. Therefore, for social historians too, there was no way to write 'non-national' history – and this holds both for the 'blends' of national and of class history produced by the social-democratic tradition in Europe as for the 'pure' class histories by the later communist traditions.<sup>15</sup>

The 'objectification' of the nation-state by academic history was codified in the 'founding myth' of Rankean history, that is, in its epistemological claim to describe the past 'as it really was' ('*wie es eigentlich gewesen*') and in its methodological claim to be *beyond* any form of partisanship, that is to be 'objective'. This combination of a truth claim (in contrast to all fictional genres) and a claim to 'objectivity' (in contrast to all non-academic, 'partisan' genres of history) has been the characteristic of most academic history ever since.<sup>16</sup> Max Weber's defence of the *Wertfreiheitspostulat* and of the 'objectivity' of the social sciences had the very same double foundation. Critics of academic history and of the *Wertfreiheitspostulat* therefore have usually questioned one of these two claims, or both.

On closer analysis, the claim to objectivity represents the 'hidden bridge' between academic history and politics, because according to Rankean theory, history's 'objectivity' is institutionally safeguarded by the impartial nation-state against all 'partisan' interests. The nation-state does

so by financing and thus by professionalizing its historians. By doing this the nation-state releases them – at least in theory – from both ‘amateurism’ and frees them from economic dependence on ‘partisan’ interests, as had been the case in earlier ecclesial and court histories, thus installing its historians with the ‘objective’ authority to speak about the past. So the *methodological* identification of academic history with ‘objectivity’ was *implicitly* connected to the *political* theory of the ‘supra-partisan’ nation-state, including the assumption that state archives were the primary storehouses of ‘realistic’ information for historians.<sup>17</sup> So, remarkably, Foucault’s theory that epistemology and politics (‘power/knowledge’) are always ‘blended’ in ‘truth regimes’ appears to have some foundation in the case of academic history.<sup>18</sup>

It is thus not accidental that academic history and the institution of centralized state archives have developed hand in hand during the post-Napoleonic period: the archive came to be seen as the historian’s only true workshop.<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, those historians who would later explicitly reject the theory of the impartial state, ranging from the Prussian School in the later nineteenth century and all other proponents of explicit nationalism (e.g. in the *Volksgeschichte*) to most proponents of Marxism in the twentieth century, have usually rejected the idea of history’s ‘objectivity’ and opted for some *explicit* form of ‘objective’ partisanship. Many nationalist historians simply regarded furthering ‘the cause of the nation’ as legitimated by the ‘objective’ course of history. Likewise, Marxists who thought that their partisanship could be founded in history’s ‘objective’ teleology characteristically claimed to subscribe to an ‘objective’ partisanship or an ‘objective’ class perspective (*objektiver Klassenstandpunkt*).<sup>20</sup>

The same logic explains why historians critical of the idea of the impartial state have recently deconstructed the theory of impartial state archives containing impartial documents as the raw material of academic history. For post-dictatorial and post-colonial states this theory held little credibility anyhow.<sup>21</sup> As Marlene Manoff has recently summarized: ‘The methods for transmitting information shape the nature of the knowledge that can be produced. Library and archival technology determine what can be archived and therefore what can be studied. Thus Derrida claims ‘archivization produces as much as it records the event’.<sup>22</sup> Criticizing the theory of state impartiality as an ideological concealment of power relations, subaltern historians subscribe to Foucault’s theory that knowledge and power are inextricably interrelated. This clearly held for the colonial setting, and it can and has been argued that similar mechanisms are at work in the national setting.

## 2. The modern regime of historicity and the nation-state

As the nation became the almost 'natural' spatial framework of academic history – replacing the older frameworks of the dynastical state and of religious history – history's temporal framework also changed fundamentally. In order to characterize specific constellations between the dimensions of the past, the present, and the future in history, Francois Hartog has coined the concept 'regime of historicity' in this context: 'The regime of historicity [...] could be understood in two ways. In a restricted sense, as the way in which a society considers its past and deals with it. In a broader sense, the "regime of historicity" designates the "method" of self-awareness in a human community' [-]. More precisely, the concept provides an instrument for comparing different types of history.'<sup>23</sup>

Following Koselleck, Hartog signalizes a transition from the 'classical regime of historicity' – captured by Cicero's formula *historia magistra vitae*, with the past being exemplary for the present and the future – to the 'modern' regime of historicity around 1800. Instead of the past being authoritative for the present in the form of practical *exempla*, after the French Revolution, the future became the point of orientation – in the form of a *telos* in the making, especially 'the nation-state' in the making – and therefore national history is intrinsically connected with the idea of a 'special mission' of each nation resulting in its 'special path' in history. This way of viewing history became possible only *after* history was no longer seen as a collection of stories about the past and after history had been 'objectified' into a *real process* with an *origin* and a *telos* of its own.<sup>24</sup> Later on in the nineteenth century we observe the same development in class history, when Marx and Marxists designated 'the classless society' in the making as history's *telos* and class struggle and the special 'mission of the proletariat' as the 'motor' of the historical process, originating in the birth of class society.<sup>25</sup>

This change in regimes of historicity implied a fundamental change in the relationship between the three dimensions of time. As far as the 'lessons of history' under the 'modern' regime of historicity are concerned, Hartog argued, 'If there is any lesson, it comes, so to speak, from the future, no longer from the past'<sup>26</sup> (fig. 4.1-4.5).

Under the 'modern' regime of historicity, historical time is transformed into *teleological* time, because history itself transforms into the process in which ('real' or 'historical') nations are originating and developing in the direction of autonomous statehood – or not: that is in the case of 'failed'



Fig. 4.1. See coloursection p. 25.



Fig. 4.2. See coloursection p. 25.



Fig. 4.3. See coloursection p. 26.



Fig. 4.4 See coloursection p. 26.

nations which didn't pass the 'threshold-principle'.<sup>27</sup> Therefore under the 'modern' regime of historicity, national history is typically represented as a process of progress towards political autonomy alias statehood of the nation – or, less typically, in its inverted form, as a process of decline and of loss of political autonomy and statehood of the 'failed' nation.

In order to analyse this notion of time we can best follow Giorgio Agamben in tracing its roots. According to Agamben the conception of time in Western history derives from two sources: from the Greek cyclical conception of time and the Christian conception of irreversible linear time. Both ideas conceive of time in geometrical or in spatial terms: for the Greeks, time basically was a moving point on a circle and Christianity conceived of time as a moving point on a straight line. Although Christian thinking replaced the Greek cyclical representation of time by a linear representation, and also replaced the Greek directionlessness of time with a direction and a – Godly – purpose, or *telos*, it retained Aristotle's definition of 'fleeting' time as 'a quantified and infinite continuum of precise fleeting instants'. In this view, time is something objective and natural that envelops things that are 'inside' it: just as each thing inhabits a place, so it inhabits time. Simultaneously, the Christian conception of time, having a direction, implied that the flow of time became *irreversible*.<sup>28</sup>



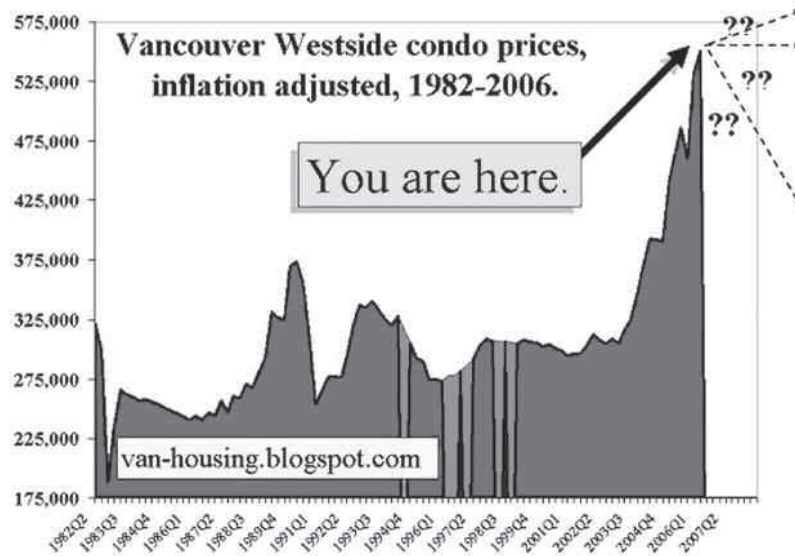


Fig. 4.5. Secularized, capitalist version of the Promised Land.

The modern 'academic' conception of time thus is a secularized version of the rectilinear, irreversible Christian time conception, stripped of its notion of an end and reduced to the idea of a structured process. Process – also known as temporal flow – therefore became the central notion of academic history, with a hidden connection to the notion of 'progress' as the teleological substitute of God in the secular versions of history.

Because time is conceived as a continuum of fleeting moments – or in other words, as a flux or a flow of discrete points – time is *destructive* of the here and now, as it 'passes by' and 'carries' it 'away', just like a flowing river carries away everything it contains. 'Fleeting' time by itself creates *distance* between the present and the past, by the very act of 'flowing'. Therefore Herodotus justifies his writing of *Histories* with the stated intention 'that time may not erase men's undertakings'. Given the destructive or erasive character of 'flowing' time, both history and memory are always threatened by time. 'It is the destructive character of time which *Histories* wishes to combat, thereby confirming the essentially ahistorical nature of the ancient concept of time'.<sup>29</sup>

Only this 'modern' conception of 'flowing', teleological time, enabled historians to evaluate and explain developments and events (like revolts and revolutions) in national histories in terms of being 'timely' ('successes'), or



as being 'untimely': as coming (too) 'late' or as coming (too) 'early' ('failures'). In several cases, national histories have merged with histories of empire (e.g. Great Britain and Russia), but since imperial histories usually have also been modelled on *one* hegemonic nation, they too can be seen as a variant of national history. Similarly, national histories could also have an 'imperial' structure when they revolved around one hegemonic region within 'the nation' (e.g. Prussia within Germany in the nineteenth century or Holland within the Dutch Republic). The same teleological time conception can be found in class histories, also allowing for judgements of historical 'success' and 'failure'.<sup>30</sup>

National histories in Europe can be typified with the help of eight ideal-typical characteristics. These characteristics were most outspoken in their nineteenth-century versions, but usually persisted well into the twentieth century.

First of all, a special character or a unique national identity has been claimed for each nation in relation to other nations. The unique national identity could be represented in terms of ethnicity (including a mix of several ethnic entities like tribes), in terms of religious affiliation, in terms of race, in political terms (e.g. state – nations) or as mixes of the aforementioned criteria.

Second, such a unique identity was claimed on the basis of the exclusion of others. Each nation was defined primarily by delineating it from either internal foes/enemies and/or from other nations – usually neighbouring nations, which were often physically present in the form of minorities within the claimed territorial borders of the nation. National identity was primarily established by negating other nations and other groups within the nation.

Third, as a result of constructions of friend-foe relationships between nations, wars and battles have furnished the dominant storylines for many national histories. Smaller nations, however, could also construct their histories around some kind of mediating role they claimed between larger nations (e.g. the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Belgium).

Fourth, the identity of the nation was located in the common origins of its members and in their shared history ever since. All members of a nation were represented as sharing common glories and common victories, often presented as reasons for pride, and of common sufferings. This shared national history was usually exemplified in a common set of national heroes, martyrs, and villains. These also imply a gender dimension. Historiographical struggles over national identity therefore always include struggles over the nations' origins.

Fifth, as the history of a nation was represented as continuity from its origins to the present, a nation was typically represented as always having been there. Its original identity is preserved through changes in time, although it may have been interrupted for long stretches of time, thereby creating the problem of continuity. The problem of continuity also arises in historiography when political ruptures change the accepted representations of continuity and parts of a nation's history are rejected afterwards (e.g. the Nazi period in German history and/or the Communist period in many Central Eastern European states). Usually, the temporal structure of national history follows the Christian/Hegelian pattern: a phase of original birth and of flowering of an *Urvolk* is followed by a phase of existential threat, decline, and/or 'death', and ending in the – conscious and intentional – 'rebirth' or 'resurrection' of the nation. So the basic temporal pattern is one of progress amidst periods of decline.

Sixth, many nations were represented as a person (male/female) or as a family. Representations of nations therefore implied gendering. Nations, for instance, could be represented as being raped by other nations or could be rescued by heroes and/or heroines.

Seventh, a nation was essentially represented as a harmonious unity and only existing as a unity. This is already implied by the family model of the nation, but also by the family model of the multi-ethnic empires. In this sense, multi-ethnic empires were often represented as 'a family of families', headed by the 'father' of the hegemonic nation. The lesson of national history was unequivocally 'united we stand, divided we fall'. This lesson was the implicit or explicit practical function of the study of national history, professional and otherwise. The nation itself knew of no internal dividing lines – and therefore national historians often discredited class history. The struggle against foreign oppression was usually represented as the struggle for internal freedom for the nation as a whole.

Eighth, a nation was usually represented as serving the cause of justice: 'God is on our side' held for each nation. Many nations claimed a special relationship with God including a special 'protective' Christian mission vis-à-vis non-Christian 'intruders' – usually Muslims. Nationalism has therefore been plausibly interpreted as the nationalisation of Christianity.<sup>31</sup>

It would take the two world wars before the future turned into a serious problem for historians – the identification of history itself with the 'progressive' development of individual nations and 'their' states in particular. It would take the Holocaust to discredit all essentialist notions of ethnicity, nationality, and race – including all ideas of 'special missions' and of privileged positions vis-à-vis others. After 1945, all essentialist forms of

ethical particularism lost their argumentative ground to ethical universalism – at least on the level of discursive legitimation. The acceptance by the UN of the ‘Declaration of Universal Human Rights’ in 1948 is often seen as the ‘point of no return’ in this respect. Another forty-five years – until 1990 with the implosion of the Soviet bloc and with the end of the Cold War – was needed to discredit similar essentialist notions of class.<sup>32</sup> All conceptions of collective identity – from ‘the nation’ and ‘ethnicity’ to ‘class’, ‘gender’, and ‘religion’ in academic history have been deconstructed increasingly since the 1970s as social and political constructions.<sup>33</sup>

With the deconstruction of all essentialisms, the very idea of History with a capital H was discredited, and with it the very idea of ‘objective’ origins and of ‘objective’ teleology. Since then, every origin and *telos* in history is being recognized as ‘man-made’. So, after almost two centuries of linear and teleological temporality in the form of essentialist historicism and essentialist nationalism, academic history is now forced to reflect on its notions of time again.

Given the intimate connection between the temporal and the spatial framework of academic history, it is not accidental that the ‘collapse of the future’ and the ‘collapse of the nation’ went hand in hand. At the latest since 1990, academic history is confronted by the ever-rising tide of world, global history, and transnational history. Whatever the exact meaning of those terms, they all clearly express the supranational wish to go *beyond* the nation-state.<sup>34</sup> The very same holds for the discourse on ‘regionalisation’ and on ‘borderlands’ as subnational ways beyond the nation.<sup>35</sup> Charles Maier’s recent introduction of the concept of ‘regimes of territoriality’ in history is therefore very ‘timely’.<sup>36</sup> The fact that simultaneously discussions have been going on about the need to ‘Europeanize’ national histories in Europe – journals devoted to ‘European’ history are definitely a growth-industry – have certainly added momentum to this fundamental questioning of the nation state as the fundamental spatial frame of history.<sup>37</sup> All this does of course not imply that national history has become a threatened species in practice – far from it – but only that it has lost its place as the unquestioned hegemonic form of academic history.

The questioning of the nation-state as the dominant spatial framework of academic history unsurprisingly also has led to a questioning of history’s traditional claims to ‘objectivity’. Earlier on I already pointed at the subaltern critique of the conception of the ‘impartial’ state, but similar fundamental critiques of hegemonic forms of partisan ‘bias’ built into academic history have been formulated by ‘others’ since the 1970s – ‘biases’ which were not recognized as impediments to writing academic history

before. In the case of Ranke and of Von Humboldt, for instance, subscribing explicitly to the Christian religion had long not been regarded as being 'partisan' and as threatening history's 'objectivity'.<sup>38</sup> For most historians well into the twentieth century, nationality simply *implied* a specific (state-) religion<sup>39</sup>. Nor had subscribing explicitly to the cause of the (German) nation/state been regarded as such by most of the 'Neo-Rankeans' later on, nor to a purely Eurocentric worldview, nor to a (male) gender-biased or a (bourgeois) class-biased worldview. The very same held for the academic historians outside Germany, so in retrospect, the discourse in academic history concerning the identification of 'biases' and 'partisanship' (threatening history's 'objectivity') just represents shifting boundaries between what could be stated and what not could be stated 'academically'. Although this process of change has often been interpreted as a sign of the discipline's 'progress' – due to the decrease of 'biases' – as a result of these combined critiques the long and happy marriage between the nation-state and academic history was showing serious symptoms of dissolution since the 1970s – or at least so it seemed.

### 3. The rise of memory and the crisis of academic history: the transition from the 'modern' to the 'presentist' regime of historicity

According to the analysis developed above, the spectacular rise of gender, ethnicity, religion, and, to a lesser extent, class as frameworks in history since the 1970s all testify to the declining significance of the nation as the 'natural' framework of academic history. The same has been argued for the rise of global, world, and transnational frameworks since the 1990s. However this may be, from the 1980s onwards and especially after 1990, another development can be observed which is undermining 'the nation' and, by implication, the 'modern' regime of historicity and the related conceptions of academic history: the rise of 'collective memory' studies. According to Jay Winter, collective memory even has taken the place in historical studies formerly held by the notions of race, class, and gender, so there are good reasons to reflect on this line of argument next.<sup>40</sup>

Specialists of memory studies all agree that the beginning of the 'memory boom' can be dated to the 1980s and that Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire* project has played a pivotal role in it.<sup>41</sup> They also tend to agree that the 'memory boom' and the 'heritage boom' are directly related – that is, the sudden displacement of 'history' by 'memory', 'heritage', and

'patrimony'. This displacement is a clear sign that the relationship to the past in Europe is changing in a significant way since the 1980s and that academic historians are losing their privileged, specialist position as the interpreters of the (national) past to others – especially to the media – although there are divergent diagnoses in play here.

Hartog, for one, does not regard the 1980s, but '1990' as the beginning of a new 'regime of historicity': the 'presentist' regime of historicity. He locates the origins of presentism in the crumbling of the Berlin Wall and in the dissolution of the Soviet Empire. In Hartog's phrasing: '*Historia magistra* presented history, or supposedly did so, from the point of view of the past. On the contrary, in the modern regime, history was written, teleologically, from the point of view of the future. Presentism implies that the point of view is explicitly and only that of the present'.<sup>42</sup> According to Hartog 'presentism' after 1990 is the consequence of the 'collapse of the future' and of the linear, 'progressive' time conception that has been underpinning national histories at least since Ranke's days and which it shared with previous Enlightenment histories of 'civilisation' and with Christian history.

Although Pierre Nora does not use the concept of 'presentism' he clearly shares Hartog's basic diagnosis. Moreover, he suggests explicitly that there is a direct connection between the rise of memory and the fall of – national – history.<sup>43</sup> As long as history was predominantly *national* history, the communities carrying memory and history *coincided* in 'the nation' and there was no opposition between history and memory, and neither was there an opposition between favouring 'the cause of the nation' and history's claim to 'objectivity'. Characteristic for this – temporary – 'symbiosis' of history and memory beginning in the nineteenth century was 'a tone of national responsibility assigned to the historian – half preacher, half soldier. [...] The holy nation thus acquired a holy history: through the nation our memory continued to rest upon a sacred foundation.'<sup>44</sup> So in Nora's eyes 'the nation' is the only possible spatial framework in (French) history. After 'the nation' had lost its 'natural' position academic history is therefore doomed to 'fragmentation'.<sup>45</sup>

Patrick Hutton has developed a similar argument to Nora, explaining why 'memory' was *not* perceived as a problem by historicism before the 1980s: 'Historicists tended to emphasise the interplay between memory and history. From Jules Michelet in the early nineteenth century to R.G. Collingwood in the early twentieth, collective memory, construed as the living imagination of the historical actors of the past, was perceived to be the subject matter of historical understanding. Often sympathising with the political traditions they studied, particularly that vaunted the nation state as

an instrument of progress, and historicists regarded history as an evocation of memory's insights. They studied history so as to recreate in the present the past as it had originally been imagined. In evoking the images in which the world was once conceived, they taught, historians could re-enter that mental universe and so recover the presence of those times. The relationship between memory and history was fluid and uncomplicated'.<sup>46</sup>

So according to Nora and Hutton, *national* history is – or at least was – a form of 'collective memory' (or of what used to be called 'tradition'), that subsequently was undermined by academic history as a form of institutionalized *Traditionskritik* during the twentieth century – especially in the form of the *Annales* conception of history of Braudel's generation, which questioned both politics and the nation as frameworks of 'scientific' history. Nora's distinction between history and memory thus is unambiguously based on – and inspired by – a conservative and nostalgic representation of 'the Nation' and of the traditional 'science of the nation', that is: national history.<sup>47</sup> With Steven Englund and Eelco Runia it therefore makes sense to seriously question whether Nora's confusing formulations about the relationship between 'history' and 'memory' are helpful *at all*, because they fail to make a workable distinction between the two.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless, it is also clear that the 'memory boom' and the 'heritage boom' have been taking place and that these have changed the parameters of academic history fundamentally since the 1980s. Not the past in *itself*, but the diverse and conflicting ways in which the past has been *experienced* and represented by specific groups has moved to the centre of the stage, manifesting itself also in permanent public attention for controversies over monuments, museums, trials, truth commissions, and reparations payments around the world: 'memory became virtually inescapable in everyday life' as Rosenfeld argues.<sup>49</sup> Therefore the question should be asked what this change consists of and how far Hartog's explicit (and Nora's implicit) analysis of 'presentism' is an adequate diagnosis of the changes in the dominant ways of experiencing time.

In a sense it is, but in my view both Hartog and Nora are 'missing' a fundamental dimension of the post-1980 'presentism', which has been emphasized by Runia, Kansteiner, Chakrabarty, Bevernage, and Rosenfeld: the fact that 'presentism' since 1980 means the presence of a traumatic, catastrophic, and 'haunting' past – of a 'past that won't go away' in the apt phrasing of Ernst Nolte.<sup>50</sup> This observation is important because traumatic experience is based on a different time conception than the linear and irreversible time conception that has been underpinning academic history (and Enlightenment history prior to that). If the origin of academic history

has been based on the experience of a rupture or a radical break between the present and the past – as has been argued by historians as diverse as Koselleck, Pocock, White, de Certeau, and Ankersmit – it is clear that traumatic experiences cannot be accounted for by the academic history and its linear and irreversible conception of time because in trauma the past stays present (and can return in ‘haunting’ forms). Hartog’s version of ‘presentism’ seems to be underestimating the continuing presence of the traumatic past and also appears to be overlooking the circumstance that when ‘the future collapses, the past rushes in’, as John Torpey formulated it. Torpey concluded that, after the collapse of both socialism and of nationalism as the two future-oriented ideologies of the twentieth century, a serious distrust in *any* political grand scheme intended to plan the future has grown. This distrust of the future is typically expressed in experiences of ‘postness’ (e.g. in postmodernity).<sup>51</sup>

In order to make sense of the widespread experience of catastrophe, Lawrence Langer’s distinction between ‘chronological time’ and ‘durational time’ may be helpful as a starting point.<sup>52</sup> His point of departure is Claude Lanzmann’s statement about the Shoah: ‘There is no greater mistake you can make about the Shoah than to regard it as history’ – emphasizing the continuing presence of the Holocaust. Langer described the distinction between chronological and durational time as follows: ‘Chronological time is the “normal” flowing, passing time of “normal” history while durational time resists precisely the closure – the putting an end to the past – that chronological time necessarily effects; durational time persists as a past that will not pass, hence as a past is always present’, as Gabrielle Spiegel phrased it. It is for this reason that Langer, Spiegel, and others have argued that the Holocaust has implications for history *beyond* Holocaust historiography and this may explain its exceptional general importance since the 1980s.<sup>53</sup>

With Chakrabarty it may be useful to introduce the general notion of ‘*historical wounds*’ in this context in order to make sense of the present catastrophic predicament of the past. ‘Historical wounds’ are the result of historical injustices caused by past actions of states which have not been recognized as such. The genocidal treatment of the ‘First Nations’ by the colonial states in the former white settler colonies represents a clear historical example of this category. Quoting Charles Taylor’s analysis of ‘the politics of recognition’ Chakrabarty argues that ‘misrecognition shows not just a lack of due respect. It can inflict a grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred’. Here it makes good sense to speak, along with Chakrabarty, of a ‘particular mix of history and memory’.



'Historical wounds are not the same as historical truths but the latter constitute a condition of possibility of the former. Historical truths are broad, synthetic generalisations based on researched collections of individual historical facts. They could be wrong but they are always amenable to verification by methods of historical research. Historical wounds, on the other hand, are a mix of history and memory and hence their truth is not verifiable by historians. Historical wounds cannot come into being, however, without the prior existence of historical truths'.<sup>54</sup> Because 'historical wounds' are dependent on the recognition as such by the 'perpetrator groups' – usually at the level of 'their' state – they are 'dialogically formed' and not 'permanent formations'. As their 'dialogical formation' is part of politics, their spatial framework is usually the same as in national histories: the framework of the nation-state. As their formation is group specific and partly the result of politics, the notion of a 'historical wound' – like trauma – has predominantly been approached with suspicion in academic history.

Now with the recognition of 'historical wounds' and of 'durational time', the traditional notion of 'objectivity' also becomes problematic, because since Ranke *distance in time* was regarded as an absolute precondition for 'objectivity'. Temporal distance and 'objectivity' were directly connected because interested 'partisanship' (and interested actors) – religious, political, or otherwise – needed time in order to disappear and to give way to supra-partisan perspectives. This transformation from interested 'partisanship' to supra-partisan 'objectivity' was identified with the change from closure to accessibility of the state archives to historians.

Most historians regarded 50 years' distance as the absolute minimum for (warm) memory to 'cool down' and to transform into (cold) history but 100 years was, of course, safer.<sup>55</sup> Temporal distance between the past and the present was also seen as necessary because in historicism the consequences of events and developments – their future dimension or *Nachgeschichte*, so to speak – must be known before historians can judge and explain them 'objectively'. This is another reason why the idea of 'flowing', linear time was the basis of the traditional idea of 'objectivity' in history.

This view on the relation between time and 'objectivity' explains the very late birth of contemporary history as a specialisation within academic history. Only in the 1960s – that is: in the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust – did contemporary history slowly gain recognition as a legitimate specialisation of 'scientific' history manifesting itself in academic chairs, journals etc.<sup>56</sup> Until then, contemporary history was primarily seen as an impossible mix of the past and the present – as a



*contradictio in adiecto*. Since then contemporary history has been silently accepted by the academic historical profession although its epistemological credentials (including its claim to 'objectivity') have never been clarified. With the rise of memory studies – which may be seen as a subspecies of contemporary history because of its focus on the present experience of the past – this clarification seems more urgent than ever.

#### 4. **Picking up pieces of the past under the 'presentist' regime of historicity: heritage' studies, 'micro-history', 'global history', and 'representationalism' in historiography**

Characteristic of the memory boom and the 'presentist' regime of historicity according to both Hartog and Nora is the obsession with the archive and with 'heritage' that marks the present age, attempting at once the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past. This attempt is indicative of the ambiguity of the borderlines between the past and the present and it is visible in the explosive development of archives, museums and monuments – including archives consisting of recorded oral testimonies. Not knowing what to preserve, one tries to preserve almost everything – forgetting the practical necessity of forgetting.<sup>57</sup> 'In recent years, the surge of patrimony, in phase with that of memory, has grown to a scale that reaches the limit of what could be 'everything is heritage. [...] This is a clear indication that the present is historicizing itself [-]' according to Hartog.<sup>58</sup> Steven Spielberg's initiative to record the testimonies of *all* the survivors of the Holocaust – and similar projects inspired by it elsewhere – seems to support their diagnosis in this respect. Even biotopes and landscapes are archived as 'sites of memory' today.<sup>59</sup>

Since the nation and its origins no longer confer a unity and continuity to the past, nor a *telos* in the future, history under the 'presentist' regime of historicity therefore tends towards *disintegration* and *discontinuity*, according to Nora and Hartog. In Nora's phrasing: 'Progress and decadence, the two great themes of historical intelligibility at least since modern times, both aptly express this cult of continuity, the confident assumption of knowing to whom and to what we owe our existence – whence the importance of the idea of "origins" [...] It is this relation which has been broken.'<sup>60</sup> Instead of the search for identity in the continuity between 'us' and 'our forefathers', which characterised the 'modern' regime of historicity, the *search for alterity* in the *discontinuity* between the present

and the past is characteristic for the 'presentist' regime of historicity now in place: 'Given to us as radically other, the past has become a world apart.'<sup>61</sup> Micro-history and history of everyday life according to Nora are characteristic of this 'presentist' consciousness of the alterity of the past. This is, he suggests, a consciousness of alterity paradoxically clothed in the garb of directness (oral literature, quoting informants to render intelligible their voices being the characteristic of these two historical genres);<sup>62</sup> 'It is no longer genesis that we seek but instead the decipherment of what we are in the light of what we are no longer'.<sup>63</sup> Although neither Nora nor Hartog even mentions global and world history, following their argument, both could also be seen as typical 'presentist' genres of history, because like micro-history they seem to privilege the synchronic dimension over the diachronical and thus discontinuity over continuity. The same goes for the growing popularity of 'network approaches' in history.

This diagnosis based on Nora and Hartog remains one-sided, however, if we don't consider the tendencies which point in the opposite direction – that is: genres of history writing reaffirming 'the nation', national history, and its continuities. This includes the growth industry of histories of Europe in which the history of the European Union is conceptualized on the model of the (super) nation-state.<sup>64</sup> Although seldom defended in theory, national history still has an overwhelming presence in popular history, in history education – the debates about the 'historical canon' are just one symptom in case – but also – *mirabile dictu* – in memory studies itself.<sup>65</sup> Not only was Nora's *lieux de mémoire* project itself fundamentally based on a national framework, as Englund has convincingly argued, but the same goes for all of its copies outside France.<sup>66</sup> A growing number of national states from Luxemburg to Latvia have developed their own 'sites of memory' projects in the meantime – *within* a national framework. So Müller certainly is right in pointing out that in many states – especially those which have been subject to Soviet rule – 'memory has become shorthand for a glorious past that needs to be regained in the near future (and the 'near abroad')'.<sup>67</sup> The circumstance that recently also *transnational* 'sites of memory' are sought after does not alter this basic fact.<sup>68</sup> Therefore the relationship between the memory approach and the national framework remains an ambivalent one because sometimes 'memory' looks suspiciously much like an incarnation of national history.

However this may be, Nora is undoubtedly right about at least *one* characteristic of the 'presentist' regime of historicity. I am referring to the total abandonment of the ideal of 'resurrecting the past' after the nation lost its status as the natural backbone of history, and to the 'epistemological'

consequence of this 'loss': the central place occupied by the notion of *representation*.<sup>69</sup> Presentism, according to Nora, means the acknowledgement of the fact that our relationship to the past is inevitably shaped by our present modes of representation.

Hutton has located the renewed interest in *narrative* in this self-reflective, 'representational' stage of historiography, which usually is also connected with the 'linguistic turn' in philosophy. This stage started with Hayden White's *Metahistory* (1973) which manifested 'the end of the traditional trust in the 'transparency' of narrative and of the 'uncritical faith of historians in the neutrality of historical narrative, a faith whose bedrock was fact.'<sup>70</sup>

According to Hartog this self-reflective representationalism is the result of the gradual 'forgetting' of the past *and* of the future with the *omnipresence* of 'the present' as a result. "'Presentism" pretends to be its own horizon and it tries to shape both the future and the past according to its own image, so to speak, as a-temporal replicas of itself'.<sup>71</sup>

Hartog aptly exemplifies the 'presentist' condition in the transition from the 'monument' to the 'memorial', 'as less of a monument and more a place of memory, where we endeavour to make memory live on, keeping it vivid and handing it on'.<sup>72</sup> Therefore the 'memory' being referred to under the 'presentist' regime of historicity is not a 'real' memory at all: 'Heritage associations demonstrate the construction of a memory that is not given, and therefore not lost. They work toward the constitution of a symbolic universe. Heritage should not be studied from the past but rather from the present and concerning the present.'<sup>73</sup>

Another example – which Hartog does not mention – is the phenomenon of the 'interactive' or the 'experience' museum which probably represents the future model of all museums. Why would you keep looking at bad black and white pictures taken at, for example, Verdun in 1916 or in Normandy in 1944, if you can have the experience of being *virtually present* in a muddy trench at Fort Douamont or taking cover behind a dead GI on Omaha Beach? Strange as it may sound, the 're-enactment' and 'resurrection of the past' as ideals of academic history may make their 'comeback' as 'living history' in the experience museum of the future – in the form of digitalized and interactive virtual history.<sup>74</sup>

Like Nora, Hartog emphasizes that the nation-state is no longer under control of 'history-memory', because its definition of 'national history memory' is 'rivalled and contested in the name of partial, sectarian or particular memories (groups, associations, enterprises, communities, which all wish to be recognised as legitimate, equally legitimate, or even more legitimate).'<sup>75</sup> So, if Hartog is right – and given the private origins of

many recent monuments and museums he at least has a point – those groups which are promoting other ‘codes of difference’ than the nation have been successful at the end of the twentieth century.

As argued, above Hartog’s analysis of ‘presentism’ appears to be underestimating the presence of the traumatic past and therefore is in need of a revision. The reason for revision is that ‘forgetting’ the past and ‘forgetting’ the future cannot be located on the same plane – as Hartog does – because the (traumatic) past may be ‘haunting’ the present in a way the future cannot. Although Hartog acknowledges both that the twentieth century has a catastrophic character, and that ‘presentism’ as a mode of temporal thinking has serious flaws – because the ‘repressed’ past and present may ‘return’ – he keeps handling the past and present as equivalent temporal dimensions.<sup>76</sup> With Torpey, however, I think there are good reasons to see the ‘return’ of the past and the ‘collapse’ of the future as directly connected. And with Eelco Runia, Ewa Domanska, and Berber Bevernage I think that it is about time to turn the ‘presence’ (and the ‘absence’) of the past into a renewed object of historical and of theoretical reflection.<sup>77</sup>

Hartog illustrates the flaws of presentism with the illuminating example of the presentist ‘*museified gaze*’ concerning the Berlin Wall after 1990 (fig. 4.6). The ‘museified gaze’ ‘would like to prepare, starting from



Fig. 4.6. Museumification of the Berlin Wall at the Bernauerstrasse.



Fig. 4.7. See coloursection p. 27.

today, the museum of tomorrow, assembling today's archives as if they were already yesterday's, caught as we are between amnesia and the desire to forget nothing'. As soon as the wall was destroyed in 1989-1990, its instantaneous museification began as well as its immediate merchandising.<sup>78</sup> Similar observations could be made related to the former GDR as such (fig. 4.7 and 4.8).

So, although apparently triumphant in the twenty-first century, 'presentism' seems fundamentally insecure of itself. In Hartog's apt phrasing: 'The past is knocking at the door, the future at the window and the present discovers that it has no floor to stand on'<sup>79</sup> (fig. 4.9).

Like Nora, Hartog thus interprets the craze for memory and heritage as a sign not of continuity between the present and the past, but as a sign of rupture and of discontinuity due to the acceleration of change; 'Heritage is one way of experiencing ruptures, of recognising them and reducing them, by locating, selecting, and producing semaphores. [...] Heritage is recourse in times of crisis.'<sup>80</sup>

So, if Nora and Hartog's analyses are correct in connecting the craze for memory and heritage with the experience of rupture and of crisis – as I think they are – memory and patrimony appear to be the clear winners in their competition with academic history since the end of the twentieth century. After almost two centuries, distance in time – which until the 1960s was regarded as a precondition of writing academic history and thus for being a 'professional' historian – apparently has very little left to recommend itself. As Hartog observes; 'The past attracts more than history; the presence of the past, the evocation and the emotions win out over keeping a distance and mediation'.<sup>81</sup> The touristification and the commodification of the past fit perfectly in this picture of vanishing distance.<sup>82</sup>



Fig. 4.8. Check Point Charlie as a tourist museum.



Fig. 4.9. The 'presentist condition' of history: 'no floor to stand on'.



So, all in all, after '1990' both the past and the future seem to have collapsed as points of orientation, so to speak – and as a consequence academic history is stuck in the present and is in need of coming to terms with the presence of a catastrophic past.<sup>83</sup> Indicative of this 'collapse' is, as was argued earlier, that both the temporal and the spatial frames of academic history have turned into topics of fundamental reflection and debates (which sometimes are referred to as the 'spatial' and the 'temporal turn'). The earlier debates about micro-history and the ongoing debates about transnational, comparative, global, and world history all indicate that the nation-state is no longer the self-evident backbone – the spatial frame – of history, although the place of national history in history education is still quite strong. With the questioning of the nation-state, the 'progressive' future orientation of academic history is on the agenda, too – unless historians will develop an exclusive preference for histories of decline, that is: for the *inverted* forms of linear 'progressive' history. The renewed interest in histories of disintegrating empires should remind us that this is a real option to deal with anxieties about the future. In this context one could think of the bestselling imperial histories written by Niall Ferguson, Paul Kennedy, and Norman Davies<sup>84</sup> (fig. 4.10).



Fig. 4.10. See coloursection p. 27.

The only sensible thing academic historians can do under the 'presentist' condition, according to Hartog, is to reflect on their own temporal and representational position in a comparative way and to argue for it explicitly.<sup>85</sup> This does, of course, not 'cure' their temporal and representational condition, but makes it at least self-reflective'.<sup>86</sup>

A similar self-reflective approach to history has been proposed by Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann in their proposal for a *histoire*

*croissée* ('crossed history' or 'entangled history'): 'In contrast to the mere restitution of an "already there", *histoire croissée* places an emphasis on what, in a self-reflective process, can be generative of meaning'. '*Histoire croissée* raises the question of its own historicity through a threefold process of historicification: through the object, the categories of analyses, and the relationship between the researcher and object'.<sup>87</sup>

Interestingly, Hartog ends his reflections on academic history by returning to its origin, that is: to national history: 'How should we write national history without reactivating the patterns of nineteenth century historiography: that is to say, the close association of progress and the nation (the nation as progress and history as progress of the nation), or without presenting the nation as a paradise lost? It is here that it would be especially useful to be able to reopen the past, and look at it as a set of possible pasts which were at one time possible future and to show how the way of the national state, with its national or nationalist historiography, generally won out'.<sup>88</sup>

Hartog does not indicate what the alternatives for national histories would look like, nor is he very specific about the form that historiographical self-reflexivity should take. I think it is possible to be more precise than Hartog in this respect, among others by drawing on the debates in transnational and global history and by drawing a lesson from the history of national history writing. The basic track to follow suggested here is, I think, to analyse and historicize the conceptual frames in history in their epistemological, political, and ethical struggles with competing frames – thus in a sense taking Foucault's idea of power/knowledge seriously. In case of the national frame of history – which, as argued above, has been regarded as the 'natural' frame by academic historians for almost two centuries – this implies conceptualising the alternatives for national history in a systematic way by tracing them over time in their competition and struggle with national histories.

From the political point of view a self-reflexive approach would mean to take the politics of history seriously in at least three senses. First, this implies to acknowledge and to analyse the inherent political dimension of academic history through its inherent connection to the state. This implies a farewell to the traditional idea that there is any direct connection between the state and 'supra-partisanship' or 'objectivity'. The deconstruction of the 'neutral' notion of the state archive is a case in point.

Second, it means to acknowledge and analyse the discipline of history itself as a 'disciplinary field' in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu and of Michel Foucault, in which the struggle for power manifests itself in the vocabulary



of epistemology and of methodology.<sup>89</sup> In short, this means to analyse *all* definitions of boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate statements in a discipline as 'essentially contested' and therefore as inherently political.<sup>90</sup>

Third, it means to analyse the 'politics of time', because the temporal demarcations used in history (e.g. 'progressive' and 'backward', 'timely' and 'untimely') are as politically contested as the spatial demarcations (e.g. 'national', 'European' and 'colonial'). Remarkably, the issue of 'chronopolitics' until now has primarily been addressed by anthropologists and not by historians. Bevernage, however, has recently been addressing this issue up front.<sup>91</sup>

From the ethical point of view a self-reflexive approach in history would imply taking the ethics of history seriously – and not just as a side dish for special festival occasions or as a hobby of some reflexive *emeriti*. The catastrophic practical consequences in the twentieth century of all sorts of ethical particularism (especially in their ethnic, national, racial, and class variants) have created the 'historical wounds' I referred to earlier on and have caused the overwhelming presence of a traumatic past in the twentieth century.<sup>92</sup> In this way the 'exclusion of The Other' has *moulded* the catastrophic history we are facing in the twenty-first century. Therefore the 'inclusion of The Other' – usually in the form of including the perspectives of *all* sides involved in histories – are on the agenda of history for some time now and so is the issue of universal human rights.<sup>93</sup> Because the very recognition of 'historical wounds' is dependent on the recognition of universal human rights, the politics of recognition are constitutive of the very subject matter of academic historians. Antoon de Baets certainly has a point in naming the Declaration of Universal Human Rights (1948) one of the most important texts also for present-day historians.<sup>94</sup>

From the epistemological point of view, a self-reflective approach in history would imply a reconstruction and deconstruction of the frames of representation which are competing with each other in history. Epistemologically self-reflective history would pursue the same objectives that Arif Dirlik has formulated for world history: 'My rehearsal of the historicity, boundary instabilities, and internal differences – if not fragmentations – of nations, civilisations, and continents is intended to underline the historiographically problematic nature of [world] histories organized around such units. These entities are products of efforts to bring political or conceptual order to the world – political and conceptual strategies of containment, so to speak. This order is achieved only at the cost of

suppressing alternative spatialities and temporalities, however, as well as covering over processes that went into their making. A [world] history organized around these entities itself inevitably partakes of these same suppressions and cover-ups.’<sup>95</sup>

So just like Hartog and Werner/Zimmermann, Dirlik argues that only through the historification of the representational codes and of the conceptual frameworks of history, can their contingency and their relationships with suppressed alternatives be restored. If there is no way out of our ‘presentist’ condition – and this appears to be the conclusion following from the arguments developed in this article – the best we can do is to face it and reflect on its consequences for the ways in which we are dealing with the past.

## Notes

1. Samuel Huntington, who had predicted ‘a clash of civilisations’ in 1993, was a political scientist.
2. Michel de Certeau, *The Writing History of History*, New York 1988; Eelco Runia, ‘Burying the Dead, Creating the Past’, in: *History and Theory* 46/3 (2007) 313–326.
3. Jan-Werner Müller (ed.), *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe. Studies in the Presence of the Past*, Cambridge 2002, 4.
4. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream. The ‘Objectivity Question’ and the American Historical Profession*, Cambridge 1988.
5. Wulf Kansteiner Compare Pierre Nora’s statement ‘whoever says memory says Shoah’, cited in Müller (ed.), *Memory and Power*, 14. Given the paradigmatic role of the Holocaust as *Urtrauma* in history, it is remarkable that Frank Ankersmits’ recent attempt to give a philosophical account of historical experience leads him to the conclusion that the Holocaust does *not* represent a trauma. See F.R. Ankersmit, *De Sublieme Historische Ervaring*, Groningen 2007, 387.
6. See Rüdiger vom Bruch, ‘Geschichtswissenschaft’, in: St. Jordan (ed.), *Lexikon Geschichtswissenschaft. 100 Grundbegriffe*, Stuttgart 2002, 124–130; Georg Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, Hanover and London 1997; Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: a Curious History*, London 1997; Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, Berkeley 1990.
7. For a global perspective, see D. Woolf ‘Historiography’, in: M.C. Horowitz (ed.), *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, New York 2004, xxxv–lxxxv.
8. Q. Edward Wang, ‘Cross-Cultural Developments of Modern Historiography: Examples from East Asia, the Middle East, and India’, in: Q. Edward Wang and Franz Fillafer (eds.), *The Many Faces of Clío. Cross-cultural Approaches to Historiography. Essays in Honor of Georg G. Iggers*, New York/Oxford 2007, 189, 193, 194. Q. Edward Wang, ‘Beyond East and West: Antiquarianism, Evidential Learning, and Global Trends in Historical Study’, in: *Journal of World History* 19/4 (2008) 489–519.

9. For the variety of history, see D. Kelley (ed.), *Versions of History from Antiquity to the Enlightenment*, New Haven and London 1991; F. Stern (ed.), *Varieties of History. From Voltaire to the Present*, London 1970; Woolf, 'Historiography'.
10. Georg Iggers, 'The Professionalization of Historical Studies' in: Kramer and Maza (eds.), *Western Historical Thought*, 234. Further see: R. Thorstendahl and I. Veit-Brause (eds.), *History-Making. The Intellectual and Social Formation of a Discipline*, Stockholm 1996; Wolfgang Weber, *Priester der Klio: historisch.-sozialwissenschaftliche. Studien zur Herkunft und Karriere deutscher Historiker und. zur Geschichte der Geschichtswissenschaft 1800-1970*, (Frankfurt am Main 1987); Pim den Boer, *History as a Profession: The Study of History in France, 1818-1914*, Princeton 1998; Gabriele Lingelbach, *Klio macht Karriere. Die Institutionalisierung der Geschichtswissenschaft in Frankreich und in den USA in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Göttingen 2003.
11. Daniel Woolf, 'Of Nations, Nationalism, and National Identity. Reflections on the Historiographic Organization of the Past', in: Wang and Fillafer (eds.), *Many Faces of Clio*, 73; Stefan Berger, 'Towards a Global History of National Historiographies', in: idem (ed.), *Writing the Nation. A Global Perspective*, Houndmills 2007, 1-30. Gerard Bouchard, *The Making of the Nations and Cultures of the New World: An Essay in Comparative History*, Montreal and Kingston 2008.
12. See Joep Leersen, 'Nation and Ethnicity', in: Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (eds.), *The Contested Nation: Religion, Ethnicity, Class and Gender in National Histories*, Houndmills 2008, 75-104. Ranke as a conservative, however, still identified states more with their ruling dynasties than with nations.
13. Leopold von Ranke: 'Aus dem Besonderen kannst du wohl bedachtsam und kühn zu den Allgemeinen aufsteigen; aus der allgemeine Theorie gibt es keinen Weg zur Anschauung des Besonderen', in: Leopold von Ranke, *Die großen Mächte. Politisches Gespräch* (ed. Ulrich Muhlack), Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig 1995, 90.
14. For the history of the very idea of objectivity see Lorraine Daston and Peter Gallison, *Objectivity*, New York 2007, for the nineteenth century, see T. N. Baker, 'National History in the Age of Michelet, Macaulay, and Bancroft', in: Kramer and Mah (eds.), *Companion to Western Historical Thought, 185-201*. Further see Woolf, 'Of Nations, Nationalism, and National Identity'.
15. See Thomas Welskopp and Gita Deneckere, 'Nation and Class' in: Berger and Lorenz (eds.), *The Contested Nation*, 135-171.
16. For the ideas of 'scientificity', see Heiko Fellner, 'The New Scientificity in Historical Writing around 1800', in: Heiko Fellner and Kevin Passmore (eds.), *Writing History. Theory and Practice*, London 2003, 3-22. For Ranke's ideas of 'objectivity' see Rudolf Vierhaus, 'Rankes Begriff der historischen Objektivität', in: R. Koselleck, W.J. Mommsen, and J. Rüsen (eds.), *Objektivität und Parteilichkeit*, Munich 1977, 63-77.
17. Grafton, *Footnote*, 59-60, argues that Ranke himself was guilty of identifying specific archival information with 'the past' itself: 'It became evident that he [Ranke, CL] had unjustifiably accepted certain classes of documents – like the official reports of Venetian ambassadors to their senate – as transparent windows on past states and events rather than colourful reconstructions of them, whose authors wrote within rigid conventions, had not heard or seen everything they had reported, and often wished to convince their own audience of a personal theory rather than simply to tell them what had happened'. Grafton also argues that 'in his reliance on central archives and great family papers

- Ranke had accepted, without reflecting hard enough, a certain interpretation of history itself: one in which the story of nations and monarchies took precedence over that of peoples or cultures [-]'. For the problem of the 'scientificity' of national history in France, see Steven Englund, 'The Ghost of Nation Past', in: *Journal of Modern History* 64/2 (1992) 307-310.
18. For Foucault see Joseph Rouse, 'Power/Knowledge', in: Gary Gutting (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault*, Cambridge 2005, 95-122.
  19. See Jo Tollebeek, "'Turn to Dust and Tears'": Revisiting the Archive', in: *History and Theory* 43/2 (2004) 237-248.
  20. See Koselleck et al. (eds.) *Objektivität und Parteilichkeit*. For *Volksgeschichte* see Peter Schöttler (ed.), *Geschichte als Legitimationswissenschaft*.
  21. See for South Africa: Carolyn Hamilton et al. (eds.), *Refiguring the Archive*, Dordrecht-Boston-London 2002.
  22. Marlene Manoff, 'Theories of the archive from across the disciplines', *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 4/1 (2001) 12; Terry Cook, 'Archival science and postmodernism: new formulations for old concepts', *Archival Science* 1 (2001) 3-24.
  23. F. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', *Museum International*, 57, 227 (2005) 7-18, 8.
  24. Koselleck has therefore rightly observed that the *Geschichtswissenschaft* and the *Geschichtsphilosophie* came into existence simultaneously: 'It is no accident that in the same decades in which history as a singular discipline began to establish itself (between 1760 and 1780), the concept of a philosophy of history also surfaced'. [...] 'History and philosophy of history are complementary concepts which render impossible any attempt at a philosophization of history'. See Reinhart Koselleck, 'Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process', in: idem, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, Cambridge MA 1985, 32.
  25. Harold Mah, however, has traced the direct connection of origin and telos in historicism back to the very origins of *Historismus*: 'Both Herder's and Möser's historicist histories required the assumption of a mythical past. A mythical event or development functioned for them as a privileged origin establishing a standard whose continuous influence was then perceived to be disseminated throughout the rest of history, so that subsequent events or developments could be measured against it or legitimated by it. That originating event or development thus overshadowed what came after it; it reduced or even cancelled out the historical significance of subsequent events. German tribalism thus defined the truly German, while the French culture that many of Germany's rulers had adopted in the eighteenth century was rejected as alien or anti-German'. 'Historicism, in other words, can paradoxically be seen as the expression of a desire to overcome history, whether it was the cosmopolitan influence of French culture or other undesirable developments and political life'. [...] 'The importance of this ahistorical classical thinking in a deeply historicizing philosophy is a paradox that suggests the same motive that is suggested in historicist myths of origin – namely, that one attends to historical development in its most elaborate way in order to overcome history, to transcend its contradictions, transience, and mortality'. Harold Mah, 'German Historical Thought in the Age of Herder, Kant, and Hegel', in: Kramer and Sarah Mah (eds.), *A Companion to Western Historical Thought*, 143-166, here: 160-161.
  26. F. Hartog, 'Time, History and the Writing of History: the Order of Time', in: R. Thorstendahl and I. Veit-Brause (eds.), *History-Making*, 85-113, 97.

27. See E. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge 1992, 31-32, 157-158. The recent discussion about 'failed' states can be directly connected to the idea of 'failed' nations.
28. Giorgio Agamben, 'Time and History. Critique of the Instant and the Continuum', in: idem, *Infancy and History. The Destruction of Experience*, London and New York 1993, 91-105. Also see Berber Bevernage, 'Time, Presence, and Historical Injustice', in: *History and Theory* 47/2 (2008) 149-167; and Berber Bevernage, 'We victims and survivors declare the past to be in the present'. *Time, Historical Injustice and the Irrevocable*, Ghent 2009.
29. Agamben; 'Time and History', 94.
30. See Welskopp and Deneckere, 'Nation and Class'.
31. See Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz, 'National Narratives and their "Others": Ethnicity, Class, Religion and the Gendering of National Histories', in: *Storia della Storiografia / Geschichte der Geschichtsschreibung* 50 (2006) 59-98.
32. See Dennis Dworkin, *Class Struggles* (Series History: Concepts, Theories and Practice), Harlow 2007.
33. See Chris Lorenz, 'Representations of Identity. Ethnicity, Race, Class, Gender and Religion. An Introduction to Conceptual History', in: Berger and Lorenz (eds.), *The Contested Nation*, 24-60.
34. See Geoff Eley, 'Historicizing the Global, Politicizing Capital: Giving the Present a Name', *History Workshop Journal* 1 (2007) 1-35, and Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels Petersson, *Die Geschichte der Globalisierung*, Munich 2003, 12-15. As for transnational history, Michael Geyer has signaled a 'growing consensus' of what it is *not*: 'The emerging consensus is also suitably *vague*. [...] Almost everyone, it seems, agrees on the basic presupposition that there is history 'beyond the nation state' and that this history is more than national and inter-national history; that this history mandates a 'global' or, in any case, grander-than-national horizon for thought and action'. [...] 'For the time being [it] rather amounts to a project with many loose ends than a distinct approach and it is more of an orientation than a paradigm', At: <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2006-4-032>, (visited on 25-10-08).
35. See Celia Applegate, 'A Europe of Regions: Reflections on the Historiography of Sub-National Spaces in Modern Times', *American Historical Review* 104/4 (1999) 1157-1182; Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, 'From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History', *American Historical Review* 104/3 (1999) 814-842; Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, 'Entangled Histories: Borderland Historiographies in New Clothes?', in: *American Historical Review* 112/3 (2007) 787-800.
36. Charles S. Maier, 'Transformations of Territoriality 1600-2000', in: G. Budde, S. Conrad and O. Jansz (eds.), *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, Göttingen 2006. 32-56; F. Hartog, *Régimes d'Historicité. Presentisme et Expériences du Temps*, Paris 2003; F. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', *Museum International*, 57/227 (2005) 7-18.
37. See for example Ute Frevert and David Blackbourn, 'Europeanizing German history', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, Washington, D.C.* 36 (2005) 9-33. For global and world history, see Patrick O'Brien, 'Historiographical traditions and modern imperatives for the restoration of global history', *Journal of Global History*, 1 (2006) 3-39; A. Dirlik, 'Performing the world: reality and representation in the making of world history(ies)', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, Washington, DC*, 37 (2005) 9-27.

38. See my article 'Drawing the line: "Scientific" History between Myth-making and Myth-breaking', in: Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas, and Andrew Mycock (eds.), *Narrating the Nation. Representations in History, Media and the Arts*, New York/Oxford 2008, 35-55.
39. See James C. Kennedy, 'Religion, Nation and Representations of the Past', in: Berger and Lorenz (eds.), *The Contested Nation*, 104-135.
40. Jay Winter, 'The generation of memory: reflections on the "memory boom" in contemporary historical studies', *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, Washington, DC* 27 (2006) 69-92. The notions of memory and of collective identity are intertwined, however, as Müller, *Memory and Power*, 18, observes for national identity: 'Wherever "national identity" seems to be in question, memory comes to be the key to national recovery through reconfiguring the past [...]'.
  41. See Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory. History, Television and Politics after Auschwitz*, Athens OH 2006, 11-39; Kerwin Lee Klein, 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse', in: *Representations* 69 (2000) 127-150.
  42. Hartog, 'Time, History and the Writing of History', 109.
  43. P. Nora, 'Between Memory and History: les Lieux de Memoire', *Representations*, 26 (1989), 7-25, esp. 8-9. For an overview see Aleida Assmann, 'History and Memory', in: N. Smelser and P. Baltus (eds.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences*, vol. 10 (Oxford 2001) 6822-6829; P. Hutton, 'Recent Scholarship on Memory and History', *The History Teacher*, 33/4 (2000) 533-548.
  44. Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 11.
  45. For Nora's own deep nationalism see Englund, 'The Ghost of Nation Past', 299-320. For a comparison with the US, see Allan Megill, 'Fragmentation and the Future of Historiography', in *American Historical Review*, 96/3 (1991) 693-698. (reprinted in his: *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error*, Chicago 2007).
  46. Hutton, 'Recent Scholarship on Memory and History', 535.
  47. See Berger and Lorenz, 'Introduction' of *The Contested Nation*. Also see Wulf Kansteiner, 'Postmodern Historicism: A Critical Appraisal of Collective Memory Studies', 5.
  48. See Englund, 'Ghost of Nation Past', 305: 'So why call it memory if you mean history?'. Also see Eelco Runia, 'Burying the dead, creating the past', in: *History and Theory* 46/3 (2007) 315-316.
  49. Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, 'A Looming Crash or a Soft Landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory "Industry"', in: *The Journal of Modern History* 81 (March 2009) 122-158.
  50. Runia locates the presence of the past in the '*mémoire involontaire*'. Although he does not mention traumatic memory explicitly it can easily be interpreted as a part of the '*mémoire involontaire*'. See Eelco Runia, 'Presence', in: *History and Theory* 45/1 (2006) 1-20; Eelco Runia, 'Spots of Time', in: *History and Theory* 45/3 (2006) 305-317; Forum on 'Presence' (with contributions of Eelco Runia, Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht, Frank Ankersmit, Ewa Domanska, Michael Bentley, and Rik Peters), in: *History and Theory* 45/3 (2006) 305-375; Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'History and the Politics of Recognition', in: Keith Jenkins, Sue Morgan, and Alun Munslow (eds.), *Manifestos for History*, New York 2007, 77-88.
  51. John Torpey, 'The Pursuit of the Past: A Polemical Perspective', in: Peter Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Toronto 2004, 242.
  52. This problem and distinction in fact has been with history and philosophy since St. Augustine. See Herman Hausheer, 'St. Augustine's Conception of Time', in: *The*



- Philosophical Review* 46/5 (1937) 503-512: 'The essence of time is the indivisible instant in the present, which knows itself to be neither long nor short' (504).
53. Gabrielle Spiegel, 'Memory and History: Liturgical Time and Historical Time', in: *History and Theory* 41/2 (2002) 159.
  54. Dipesh Chakrabarty, 'History and the Politics of Recognition', in: Keith Jenkins, Sue Morgan, and Alun Munslow (eds.), *Manifestos for History*, New York 2007, 77-78.
  55. See M. Phillips, 'Distance and Historical Representation', in *History Workshop Journal*, 57 (2004) 123-141; M. Phillips, 'History, Memory and Historical Distance', in P. Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, Toronto 2004, 86-109. See further, B. Taylor, 'Introduction: How far, how near: distance and proximity in the historical imagination', *History Workshop Journal* 57 (2004) 117-122. The point of view formulated by the Chinese statesman Chou En-Lai (1898-1976) was not foreseen, however. In 1971, Henry Kissinger asked Chou, who had been specializing in the French Revolution in his youth, 'What do you think of the significance of the French Revolution?' Chou answered him after thinking for some time: 'It is too soon to tell'. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/asia\\_pac/02/china\\_party\\_congress/china\\_ruling\\_party/key\\_people\\_events/html/zhou\\_enlai.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/asia_pac/02/china_party_congress/china_ruling_party/key_people_events/html/zhou_enlai.stm) (20 April 2008); <http://www.anecdoteage.com/index.php?aid=1411> (20 April 2008).
  56. Alexander Nützenadel and Wolfgang Schieder (eds.), *Zeitgeschichte als Problem. Nationale Traditionen und Perspektiven der Forschung in Europa* (Sonderheft Geschichte und Gesellschaft), Göttingen 2004; Martin Sabrow et al. (eds.), *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte. Grosse Kontroversen seit 1945*, Munich 2003.
  57. On the literally sickening effects of the failure to forget, see: Jessica Marshall, 'Unforgettable', in: *New Scientist* 197 (2008), Issue Feb 16-Feb 22 2008, 30-34.
  58. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 12.
  59. See Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 12-14. Also see <http://sites-of-memory.de/main/resources.html#scholarship> for an overview (date of last access: 8 March 2009).
  60. Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 16.
  61. Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 17. However, Nora does not use Hartog's terms 'regime of historicity' or 'presentism'.
  62. Nora's diagnosis and imagery of the present state of history is also developed in F.R. Ankersmit, 'History and Postmodernism', in: F. Ankersmit, *History and Topology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor*, Berkeley 1994, 162-182; more precisely in Ankersmit's comparison of 'modern' or 'essentialist' history with a tree and 'post-modern' history with its leaves (pp. 175-6), and in his identification of history of everyday life and micro-history as the typical 'present' (or 'postmodern') genres of history (pp. 174-7).
  63. Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 17-18. Ankersmit develops a similar argument in 'The sublime dissociation of the past: or how to be(come) what one is no longer', in *History and Theory* 40/3 (2001) 295-323.
  64. See e.g. Jan Ifversen, 'Myths in writing European histories', in: Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (eds.), *Historians as Nation builders. Micro studies in National History*, Houndmills 2010 (forthcoming).
  65. For the debates about the historical canon see Maria Grever and Siep Stuurman (eds.), *Beyond the Canon. History for the Twenty-First Century*, Basingstoke 2007.
  66. See "'Lieux de memoire" in Europe: National Receptions and Appropriations of a Historiographical Concept' at: <http://www2.iisg.nl/esshc/programme9606.asp?selyear>

- =8&nw=&find=lieux+de+memoire (8 March 2009); Pim den Boer, 'Geschiedenis, herinnering en "lieux de mémoire"', in: Rob van der Laarse (ed.), *Bezeten van vroeger. Erfgoed, identiteit, en musealisering*, Amsterdam 2005, 40–59. Further see Englund, 'Ghost of Nation Past'.
67. Müller, *Memory and Power*, 8 and 9: '[...] the question of memory is often at the heart of issues about national self-determination, arguably *the* most salient political issue in eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War'. See also 17: [...] 'the approaches to memory have been significantly different in different national contexts'.
  68. See Jacques Le Rider, Moritz Czaky, and Monika Sommer (eds.), *Transnationale Gedächtnisorte in Zentraleuropa*, Innsbruck 2002.
  69. Nora, 'Between Memory and History', 17.
  70. Hutton, 'Recent Scholarship on Memory and History', 535. For the background see also Ann Rigney, 'Narrativity and Historical Representation', *Poetics Today* 12/3 (1991) 591–605, and Allan Megill, "'Grand Narrative" and the Discipline of History', in: F. Ankersmit and H. Kellner (eds.), *A New Philosophy of History*, London 1995, 151–174. For Hayden White, see Herman Paul, *Masks of Meaning. Existentialist Humanism in Hayden White's Philosophy of History*, Groningen 2006.
  71. Hartog, 'Time, History and the Writing of History', 106.
  72. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 14.
  73. H. Glevarec and G. Saez, *Le Patrimoine saisi par les Associations*, 263, quoted by Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 14.
  74. See Wulf Kansteiner, 'Alternate worlds and invented communities: history and historical consciousness in the age of interactive media', in: Jenkins et al. (eds.), *Manifestos for History*, 131–149.
  75. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 14.
  76. Hartog, 'Time, History and the Writing of History', 108–109; Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 16: 'After the catastrophes of the twentieth century, the many wounds and the significant accelerations in the actual experience of time, neither the sudden appearance of memory nor that of patrimony in the end come as a surprise. The question could even be: "Why did it take so long?"'
  77. Runia, Forum on 'Presence'; Bevernage, 'Time, Presence, and Historical Injustice'.
  78. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 14. Also see: Joachim Schlör, 'It has to go away, but at the same time it has to be kept': the Berlin Wall and the making of an urban icon', in: *Urban History* 33/1 (2006) 85–105.
  79. Hartog, 'Time, History and the Writing of History', 110.
  80. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 15.
  81. Hartog, 'Time and Heritage', 16. Müller makes a similar point: 'There is also a rather vague sense that the preoccupation with memory is part of the changed structures of temporality at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first. Against the "acceleration" of time through technical progress, the elimination of distance and the general blurring of territorial and spatial coordinates in an age of globalization, the recovery of "memory" aims at a temporal re-anchoring and even the much-talked-about "recovery of the real". Rather than a simple exhaustion of utopian energies, memory might signify a resistance to the new utopia of globalisation and to teleological notions of history' [...]. 'If one cannot change the future, one can at least preserve the past'. See Müller, *Memory and Power*, 15–16.



82. See Rob van der Laarse, 'Erfgoed en de constructie van vroeger', in: idem (ed.), *Bezeten van vroeger*, 1-29; David Lowenthal, 'Heritage and history. Rivals and partners in Europe', in: Van der Laarse (ed.), *Bezeten van vroeger*, 29-40.
83. See also John Torpey, 'The future of the past: a polemical perspective' in Seixas (ed.), *Theorizing Historical Consciousness*, 240-255, esp. p. 250; 'The discrediting of the twin forces that dominated the twentieth-century history – namely, nationalism and socialism/communism – has promoted a pervasive "consciousness of catastrophe" among the educated segments of Euro-Atlantic society'.
84. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, 1988; Norman Davies, *The Isles*, 1999; Niall Ferguson, *Colossus. The Rise and Fall of the American Empire*, 2004.
85. Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, 'Beyond comparison: histoire croisée and the challenge of reflexivity', *History and Theory* 45/1 (2006) 30-50.
86. Hartog, 'Time, History and the Writing of History', 111.
87. Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond comparison', 32-33.
88. Hartog, 'Time, History and the Writing of History', 112.
89. Pierre Bourdieu, 'The specificity of the scientific field', in: Ch. Lemert, *French Sociology. Renewal and rupture since 1968*, New York 1981, 257-293; Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (edited by Colin Gordon), New York 1980. See also George Steinmetz (ed.), *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences*, and Durham/London 2005.
90. See my article 'Drawing the line: "Scientific" History between Myth-making and Myth-breaking' for a case study concerning the disciplinary genre of national history.
91. See Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*, New York 1983; Bevernage, 'We victims and survivors'. For another exception in history see: Sebastian Conrad, 'What time is Japan? Problems of Comparative (Intercultural) Historiography', *History and Theory* 38/1 (1999) 67-83.
92. Werner Müller, *Memory and Power*, 12-13, arrives at a similar conclusion arguing that 'historical and social scientific research about memory indeed cannot be entirely separated from normative questions – not least because so many memory tales are shot through with normative claims', and 19: 'The memorialisation of history is at the same time its moralisation [...]'.
  93. See John Torpey, 'Making whole what has been smashed', in: *Journal of Modern History*; A. Dirk Moses, 'White, Traumatic Nationalism and the Public Role of History', in: *History and Theory* 44/3 (2005) 311-332; Hayden White, 'The public relevance of historical studies: a reply to Dirk Moses', *History and Theory* 44/3 (2005) 333-338.
  94. Antoon de Baets, 'The Impact of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the Study of History', in: *History and Theory* 48/1 (2009) 29-44. This does of course not imply that there is *one* set of ethical values historians should subscribe to, as Müller, *Memory and Power*, 32, rightly argues: '[...] it is important to recognize that there might be genuinely tragic choices between incompatible or even incommensurable values here [...]. There might be unsolvable dilemmas in attaining truth, justice, reconciliation and democracy all at the same time'.
95. Dirlik, 'Performing the world', 18-19.



Fig. 4.1. The 'modern' regime of historicity: the (sacred) future orients the present and the past.

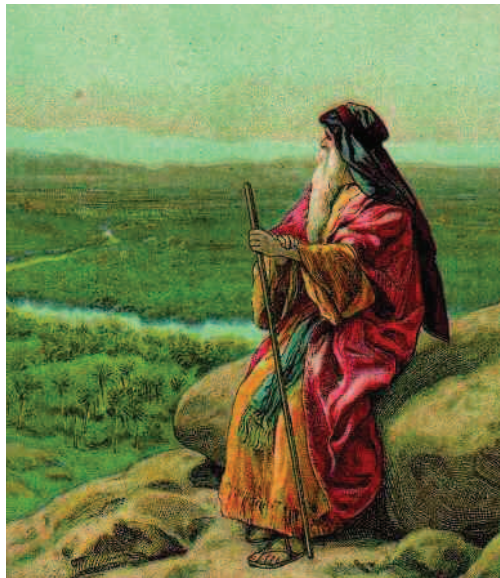


Fig. 4.2. The Christian model of the Promised Land: Moses looking at the Promised Land.



Fig. 4.3. 'Beloved Stalin – the people's happiness!': Secularized, Communist version of the Promised Land.



Fig. 4.4. 'Continuous on Revolution road to strive for highest victory'. Secularized, Maoist version of the Promised Land.





Fig. 4.7. The Berlin Wall as a museum of art: graffiti Thierry Noir.



Fig. 4.10. *The Course of Empire: Destruction?* (1836), Thomas Cole.